

INTERPARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITY REPORT

Published on July 19, 2024 in accordance with the *Interparliamentary Activities Framework*

49TH SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE FRANCOPHONIE | 49E SESSION DE L'ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

Host	Parliament of Canada
Location	Montreal, Quebec
Dates	July 6 to 9, 2024
Activity Type	Conference
Participants	1 Member of the Legislative Assembly, 1 Assembly support staff

PARTICIPANTS

- Nicholas Simons, MLA, Chair of the B.C. Section of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie)
- Artour Sogomonian, Clerk Assistant, Parliamentary Services | Secretary to the B.C. Section of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie)

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The 49th annual session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie was hosted by the Parliament of Canada in Montreal, Quebec from July 6 to 9, 2024. It was attended by Nicholas Simons, MLA and Artour Sogomonian, Clerk Assistant, as B.C.'s representatives.

On Sunday, July 7, the four standing (permanent) committees of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie met for updates and deliberations. Nicholas Simons and Artour Sogomonian participated in and observed their deliberations. The four standing committees are the:

- Standing Committee on Economic, Social and Environmental Affairs, which examines issues relating to human development (population, health, food, and the fight against poverty), sustainable development (environment, climate, energy, biodiversity, and agriculture), and economic development, all from the perspectives of democracy and solidarity throughout;
- Standing Committee on Education, Culture and Communication, which examines issues relating to cultural expression in the French language, education, training, communication, information technologies, and policies for the prevention of communicable diseases, and pandemic response and management;
- Standing Committee on Parliamentary Affairs, which examines issues relating to legislation, the monitoring and evaluation of public policies, the organizational structure of parliaments, ethics and professional conduct, and citizen participation in public life; and
- Standing Committee on Political Affairs, which examines questions of a political nature and relating to the rule of law and electoral processes, questions of security and the fight against terrorism, national development relating to the death penalty in the French-speaking world, and relations with French-speaking multinational organizations.

Of particular interest were the presentations from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda, two countries engaged in hostilities in their border regions. The DRC, represented by the President of the National Assembly, called on the Government of Rwanda to cease its support of a rebel faction known as M23 which has created a humanitarian crisis in the east of the DRC. Rwandan officials claimed their government wanted peace and that they were not providing support for rebels and welcomed discussions to resolve any differences.

On Monday, July 8, the plenary session of the 49th session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie was opened, with addresses from Hon. Raymonde Gagné, Speaker of the Senate, Hon. Greg Fergus, Speaker of the House of Commons, Hon. Randy Boissonnault, Minister Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, and Francis Drouin, Member of Parliament for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell and President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie. The plenary session proceeded to presentations and deliberations on the theme “Artificial intelligence at the service of legislators: Opportunities and risks associated with its integration in parliaments.” The plenary was later addressed by H.E. Louise Mushikiwabo, Secretary General of the International Organization of the Francophonie (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie), held a Q&A with the Secretary General, and thereafter proceeded to the consideration of administrative business (financial reports, amendments to organizational regulations).

On Tuesday, July 9, the plenary session received reports from regional delegates on the activities undertaken by the various regional administrations within the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie and activity reports of its various networks (working groups). The plenary then proceeded to the consideration of proposed resolutions coming forward from the standing committees and networks of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie. The plenary also included the consideration of resolutions brought forward by the Francophone Youth Parliament (Parlement francophone des jeunes), sponsored by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie and held concurrently during the 49th session. This allowed youth voices to be at the centre of the plenary’s work, which the participants of the Youth Parliament were permitted to observe. The priority that the organization places on youth involvement and engagement is exemplary and grounded the work of the plenary in a powerful way. The plenary closed with administrative matters and the election of a new President for a two-year term.

EXPENSES

The following combined expenses are for all participants.

Travel Expenses	\$5,645.63
Conference Fees	Nil
Subsidy	Nil
Total	\$5,645.63